

Age well. It's your choice.

For immediate release

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Hot Rod racing legend proof that ageing is no licence for slowing down

Australian Hot Rod racing legend Ray Welsh will join other inspiring seniors to celebrate active ageing at the launch of the Victorian Senior's Festival on Sunday, October 2.

Aged 73, Ray's racing achievements - including four Australian and eight consecutive Victorian racing titles - have been enjoyed by thousands of racing enthusiasts over the years. But Ray isn't slowing down. Over the past six months he's competed in 16 race meetings; making him Australia's oldest and longest-racing Hot Rod driver.

The public will get their chance to meet Ray and check out his prized Hot Rod at Federation Square from 11am on October 2, as he greets 11 other seniors with a zest for life when they arrive in a procession of V8 cars from the Albert Park Lake Grand Prix Circuit.

The ride has been organised by peak Victorian aged care body Aged & Community Care Victoria (ACCV) and leading Victorian aged and community care providers Aged Care Services Australia Group, Alzheimer's Australia Victoria, Annecto, Arcare, Bapcare, Benetas, Blue Cross Community and Residential Care, Cambridge Aged Care, Southern Cross Care, TLC Aged Care and Villa Maria and as part of the *Be Inspired! Age well: It's your choice* campaign - encouraging older people to achieve their dreams and keep active within the community.

Ray will also take on Minister for Health and Ageing David Davis in a simulated car race at Federation Square at 12.10pm. The public are also invited to compete, with two hot lap prizes to race around Sandown up for grabs.

Ray said he chose to join the *Be Inspired!* campaign because he believed in the message.

"A lot of young people don't realise what the older generation do with their lives," he said. "People are amazed when they see I'm still driving competitively. I've been saying 'it's my last year' for more than 20 years, so I'm not saying it anymore! I love it.

Ray admits racing drivers as young as 20 years old can get "pretty hairy" but says as he gets older he seems to get wiser and so does his track record.

"It's still a very competitive sport, racing around a track which is the size of a small street on bumpy dirt with cars either side of you with open wheels... it's exciting stuff."

Be Inspired! is an initiative of



VILLA MARIA



Away from the racetrack, Ray keeps himself fit and healthy with daily arm and neck strengthening exercises and chasing after his nine grandsons.

His loving wife Elaine, who is the treasurer of the Speedway Drivers Association of Victoria (SDAV) Hot Rods, of which they are both life members, is understandably proud of her husband's career.

"I took him to Tracey's Speedway in 1959 and that was the end of that, he'd found his passion," she said. "He still tows his Hot Rod and then races and then tows it all the way home again. He's had injuries over the years and got straight back into racing as soon as possible. Ray doesn't like to say much (about his career achievements) but he's done so well."

Chief Executive Officer of ACCV Gerard Mansour, who will join other CEOs with seniors in the V8 procession, said *Be Inspired!* aimed to acknowledge and thank older Victorians like Ray and Elaine for the valued economic and social contribution they make to our community.

"Every day in Victoria we provide care to more than 150,000 older people and every one of them has helped inspire our country to be what it is today. In return, our aged care industry is at the forefront of making wishes and dreams come true for older Australians in our care."

For more information on the *Be Inspired!* campaign, visit www.accv.com.au.

Media opportunities: There will be plenty of fun and colourful photo opportunities at the event on Sunday, October 2 as seniors and CEOs arrive in their V8 cars and later participate in an exciting race car simulator challenge. Interviews with inspiring seniors are also available on request, including with Hot Rod racing legend Ray Welsh.

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be **inspired!**

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2011 Victorian
Seniors Festival

Be inspired!
2-9 October

